









### CONTRACT V. DAY LABOUR.

**MEETING OF BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS.**

A meeting of the members of the Builders and Contractors' Association was held at the Builders' Exchange, in Pitt-street, last night for the purpose of discussing the "discussion on Mr. Munier's paper "Contract versus Day Labour." Mr. White, president of the association, was in the chair.

Mr. R. Cook, in referring to the construction of the telephone exchange, said that he had tendered for the kind of brick required by the Government for lining the tunnels. There was not a brick in the tunnel, but it would not fire for 1000 years, and

nothing but a volcanic disturbance would vibrate them. He said this because certain indications had been cast on the letters he had supplied by Mr. David Davies. These reflections were most unfair and should be withdrawn.

Mr. Davies said that he was very sorry to think that the remarks would have said was meant to damage Mr. Cook or the goods he manufactured. He withdrew any reflections that might seem to have been cast on Mr. Cook's bricks.

Alderman W. E. Pools resumed the debate on Mr. Manner's paper. He was certain that no one wished to bring in an amendment to the Government's motion, but he was anxious to get the contract

system. He was certain that work could not be done on a large scale economically or so well as by contract. Mr. Manner's paper showed that the people of the country were not getting the same result, especially in the Government Pricing Office, as they would by contract. But this was a mere technical observation. The real question which he perceived in throughout the country they would bring into existence one of the greatest instruments of political corruption ever known. It would be impossible to preserve political probity in those departments. He had seen an illustration of what he meant in the old London and Birmingham

Mr. Mackay Smith quoted extensively from the

utterance of labour members of Parliament, with a view to showing that the policy of that party was responsible for the socialistic tendencies which are now supposed to be prevalent, and which display themselves in the system of day labour as against contracts.

Mr. Hensley said that the results of contracts already given out ought to convince the Government

and the country that the system of day labour was a farce. He did not blame Mr. Young so much for making the experiment, but now that it had been proved a failure he ought honestly to admit it. Even if it were proved that the work could be done more cheaply by day labour, it might fairly be urged against the system that it gave the Minister enormous power. But when, in addition to that un-

demarcate result, the system was more costly, surely the argument against it was overwhelming. He considered that the tunnel work had fallen in about the right time. (Laughter.) He maintained that it was impossible to carry out work of this kind by day labour. By contract there was every incentive to have the work well done. The architect checked the contractor, and the contractor the men. If the Minister were honest, let him call for tenders for a

The Chairman explained that steps were being taken to collate the evidence and formulate facts and place it before the Select Committee which was to inquire into the system of day labour. The association had asked to be allowed to go through the addi-

tions put up for the Printing Office and examine the work done, but Mr. Young had not assented to the proposal, and had expressed amusement that the request should be made. Nevertheless, he took it that if the Select Committee wished to get at the truth of the matter it would have to grant this request, and Mr. Young might be still more amused when he found that the association's reasonable request was

The Chairman said that everyone interested in the industrial life of the community ought to be thankful to Mr. Mainer for his paper. The danger of political patronage and corruption was the gravest danger to the country—greater than the loss to the taxpayers. The experience all the world over was that contract labour was the most economical and effectual. However, he thoroughly endorsed the

action of the Minister in establishing a minimum wage. If it were right to fix the salaries of the Governor and Chief Justice by law, it could not be wrong to fix the salaries of the lowest employees. It was said that the minimum wage had a tendency to become the maximum rate of the trade; but this was not so, for he knew of cases where contractors paid more than the Government rate.

Mr. Mainer having replied, the proceedings closed.

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**NATIONAL SHIPWRECK  
SOCIETY.**

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Amongst other matters which came under the notice of the Shipwreck Society yesterday were the recent wrecks on the coast and the loss of the *Maipo* in the Tongan Group. Only in the case of the *Maipo* was there any loss of life. In that instance the captain and one of the men were drowned. In each case, however, the wrecks meant to the crews the loss of their personal effects, and the society

Where the distressed seamen were members of the society they became, of course, special cases, and received special treatment. Wives have lately been pretty numerous, and as a result 15 seamen were represented at yesterday's meeting in the disposal of relief. Other business included the granting of the society's gold medal and certificate to Captain George G. of the Red Bird, for bringing in seamen

some of his men from the wreck of his vessel at Foster. A silver medal and certificate were awarded Mr. John Ayre for rescuing James Rowntree at Pymont. Captain Weston, of the steamer Sophia Ann, was awarded a certificate for rescuing a fisherman whom he picked up at sea, having been blown off the land. It was decided to hold the annual meeting at the

Town Hall some day next month. At the meeting there was exhibited for the first time a photographic group, illuminated, of the present committee of the society. Some time ago a similar souvenir was obtained of the first committee in 1877, and the group yesterday it may be mentioned, includes some of the members of the founding committee. The photos shown are those of his Excellency the Governor-General, Messrs A. H. Mearns,

nor, vice-aunt Hampden, patron; his Honor the Chief Justice, Sir Frederick Darley, vice-patron; Mr. Frederick H. Daugan, president; Mr. James R. Fairfax, trustee; Mr. J. H. Storey, chairman; Mr. Walter S. Buzzcott, vice-chairman; Captain John Broomfield, hon. treasurer; committee of management, his Worship the Mayor of Sydney, Captain James M. Banks, Captain James Edie, Mr. James O. Fairfax, Mr. C. H. Hayes, Captain Hixon, R.N.

(President Marine Board), Captain B. Jenkins, Hon. Alexander Bethel, M.L.C., Captain T. O'Sullivan, his Honor Mr. Justice McPherson, Captain W. J. Hynes, M.N.B.; Captain A. W. Webber, secretary; Mr. Frank Gardner, Newcastle hon. secretary. The pictures are nicely mounted, and representations symbolical of the humane work of the society are given. Water colours of the barque George Thomp-

not rendering assistance at sea to the foundering barque *Girvan* in 1833; the ship *Aristides* rescuing the crew of the French barque *Terre Neuve* in 1855; and the mail steamer *Orient* supplying the distressed trig *Phyllis* with food, set off the group appropriately. The centre is occupied by a fac simile of the society's handsome certificate, and above all a medallion of the Queen encircled by the society's emblematical language.

**CENTRAL LICENSING COURT.**

The Central Licensing Court yesterday granted the following transfers of publicans' licenses:—  
Empress of India Hotel, Marrickville, R. Thomson

To A. D. Muir, Queen's, Market and Kent streets,  
J. O'Sullivan to J. Murphy, Clarendon, Devon-  
shire-street, P. Farrell to W. McDonald; Lord  
Wolsely, Ultimo, J. Copas to J. Fisher; Picton  
Arms, Campbell-street, M. Hayden to E. Doughty;  
Half-way House, Waterloo, G. Thorpe to Louisa  
Keating; Piccadilly, Pyrmont, Amelia Boulton to  
Mary Lee. Three licenses were renewed.

**THE WOOL CLIP.**

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**TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.**

Sir,—I ask your permission to criticize certain remarks contained in your wool article of Saturday, 26th instant, in which reference is made to a fore-

most of the probable dimensions of the forthcoming wool clip in this colony. You arrived at a shortage of 227,500 bales as compared with last year. This, I contend, is a result that cannot fairly be arrived at, and is apt to prove very misleading to those interested in wool matters.

I myself, for interested reasons, checked the figures very carefully by data, personally collected

in various parts of the drought-stricken country, and reckoning at the rate of 13 bales to the 1000 sheep, I made the probable shortage indicated to be 91,000 bales, and not 227,500, as your article has done. This shortage, allowing for the fact that flocks will not this year eat so well as they did last, would bring the shortage to somewhere near 120,000 bales, which is an estimate almost identical with that

Your correspondent seems to use to err in basing his calculations on 56½ millions, the quantity that might have been in the colony had none been killed for consumption, exported, or died. It is distinctly stated that of the 48 million sheep in the colony on 1st December last probably two to three millions were not shorn, being lambs of the late winter and spring drop, and 39 millions is mentioned as the

number to be available for shearing this year. Thus, as compared with last year, the loss of some seven millions is estimated, or, at 12 bales to the 1000 sheep, a shortage of 91,000 as above.

In your article you declare it "futile to attempt to estimate." We shall all know in 12 months exactly what the shortage is; but if we wish the shortage to recoup owners for their losses in sheep by an in-

The figures given cannot be construed into a shortage of 227,000 bales. Such a conclusion would never be arrived at or believed by any wool expert. Estimates of the likely shortage were called to Europe by buying houses some weeks back, and further inquiries are constantly being made on this subject; and it would, therefore, be of great benefit to the trade, and I think I may add, to the wool growers, to have the views of the Government on this subject.

would give estimates which would assist those who desire for business purposes to arrive at some conclusion. I am, &c., **SHIPPED.**

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